

Bord Gáis Energy

Innovating for a digital-first business transformation

As Bord Gáis Energy and its customers navigate their way to a reduced-carbon future, new digital services are the key to business growth.

Andy Nason and his team provide services for all parts of the Bord Gáis Energy business. As the Head of Service and Infrastructure for Ireland, Andy's mandate is to provide stable, reliable, and secure production services that support business as usual, as well as deliver change plans within a fast-paced business environment.

Handling zero-day security mandates, for example, were especially disruptive and difficult to manage. "About 4 years ago, I got the dreaded call one Friday evening," Andy relates. "On Sky News there was breaking news about ransomware infections. We needed to take actions on our side and I remember being horrified that it resulted in us having to stand up a team of 30+ people to patch over 400 servers. And I think I spent the weekend in question—at least 20+ hours—on checkpoint calls."

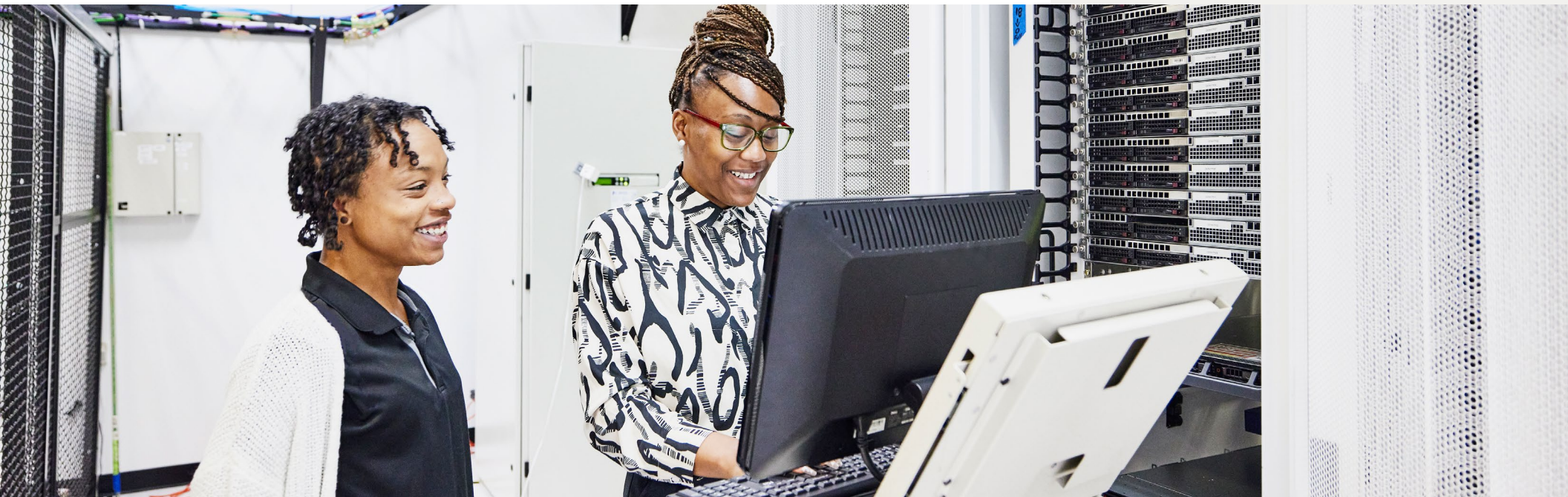
Without service stability, the business could not deliver the new digital journeys necessary to attract and retain customers. To move beyond those operational limitations, Andy engaged Kyndryl—a trusted partner since 2011—to propose and implement a solution that would help his staff do more while improving speed, quality, and cost-efficiency. Most importantly, Andy's team required a solution that would enable them to spend much more of their time supporting the delivery of change plans.

Results

- 6 hours for a zero-day patch of more than 300 servers
- 40% of all incidents automatically resolved end to end
- 0 Priority 1 incidents for all of 2021
- 0 production downtime while transitioning to Kyndryl Storage as a Service

"Kyndryl people get it. They understand that we push a high bar when it comes to our expectations—but the outcome is that when we're successful, they are successful."

- Andy Nason, Head of Service and Infrastructure, Bord Gáis Energy



Supporting business growth with automation

“Kyndryl went after the IT service management stack, proposing to handle event management end to end with [Red Hat] Ansible automation and tooling and integration into [an existing] ServiceNow platform. The plan included automating security patching,” Andy explains.

Kyndryl used Red Hat® Ansible® Automation Platform to progressively automate event and alert management, and all security code controls. The result was unprecedented stability across the Bord Gáis IT estate. By 2021, two years after implementation, the solution automatically diagnosed 72% of all ServiceNow issues and automatically resolved 40% of them using Ansible playbooks. Priority 1 incidents were reduced from 31 in 2018 to zero by 2020, and Priority 2 incidents reduced from 469 in 2018 to zero by 2020. For 2021, Priority 1 events held steady at zero. End-to-end automated resolution often closes trouble tickets in seconds, making 20–30% of the Ansible traffic nearly invisible. Andy’s team was largely relieved of their maintenance burden, allowing them to shift attention to more consistently meeting the needs of line-of-business partners.

The value of the solution became dramatically clear when the security operations team recently issued a high-level, zero-day vulnerability alert—three patches that had to be applied ASAP.

“Two Kyndryl team members prepared all the patches and alerted me that everything was ready to go,” Andy explained. “We pushed the button and the patches were automatically deployed to more than 300 Windows servers. The whole process took under six hours.”

Besides simplifying zero-day events, Ansible automation reduced what used to be a labor-intensive, six-week quarterly patching cycle to just two days a month. Today, all server health, security, and compliance checks are automated through Ansible playbooks, reducing the incident alert volume by 30%.

AIOps: Taking the next step in continuous improvement

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, national lockdowns, extreme weather, and staff relocations, Andy and the Kyndryl team kept their eyes on delivering continuous improvement to the business. They deployed a new AIOps toolkit that provides a single view across the estate, and SMEs review the data flows from the AIOps tools weekly.

Actionable insights help the Kyndryl team automate more effectively, allowing them to zoom in on details that reveal instances where automation may be repeatedly fixing the same problems on the same servers—cleaning up disk space, for example—when the real solution is to provision more resources. Based on these insights, the team can respond with a new or modified Ansible playbook.

As Bord Gáis moves more workloads to the cloud, the same tools will follow, providing visibility into consumption profiles that can lead to significant cost savings.





Creating new business value based on true partnership and freedom to innovate

What does all this automation mean to Andy on a day-to-day basis? “Key Kyndryl people are available in a matter of minutes when an urgent issue arises,” Andy says, “and they come to a call already knowledgeable about the issue. That’s because there’s buffer in a person’s day to take the lead in a technical area and understand the status quo.”

The result? Relationships that are better than ever—freed up from repetitive maintenance tasks, Bord Gáis Energy and Kyndryl work together in strong partnership to deliver value to the business.

One example of this partnership is the Kyndryl Storage as a Service solution the business needed to hold valuable data. Kyndryl delivers storage resources that the company pays for on a consumption basis, while Kyndryl takes responsibility for owning, supporting, and provisioning the infrastructure.

“The core team was there and focused all the time on the project, which allowed us to deliver at a phenomenal speed for the business while keeping it almost invisible. It was a very complex migration, and Kyndryl did it with zero downtime and zero impact to business operations,” Andy says. “Life post-migration is very good. All I’m getting is positive feedback from our customers.”

Migrating to public cloud

With Kyndryl providing design, building the landing zone, and running the services, Andy is moving Bord Gáis Energy systems—including all automation and tooling—to the Microsoft® Azure cloud platform. The team is already using Ansible as they build out the landing zone.

Andy concludes: “It definitely feels like we’re partnering with each other, and we share our business challenges.”

Take the next step

[Learn more](#) about how Kyndryl advances the vital systems that power human progress.

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